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WESTERN THEATRE



AUTUMN

— 1949 —

25 CENTS

Y.1 #2



ONE ACT PLAYS

FOR FESTIVAL PRODUCTION

THE SHOEMAKERS OF SYRACUSE Fantasy

John Hoare. 6 m. 3 f. Int. This is a fantasy of Sicily in 1750. For centuries past the same family of shoemakers has made all the shoes for the castle, where lived the Dukes, their families and entourage. The Duke suddenly dies and there is no heir. His brother from Palermo will inherit the Dukedom, bringing to Syracuse his entourage and retinue, including his shoemakers. What can our shoemakers do to save this disastrous situation? Just how this feat is accomplished is the story of this play. 45c. (Royalty, \$5.00.)

OVERLAI'D Comedy

Robertson Davies. 2 m. 1 f. Int. Pop, an elderly farmer, is a devotee of the Saturday afternoon opera broadcasts. Ethel, his daughter, feeds her soul on good works and ambition for her son, whom she calls Lover. When Mr. Bailey, the insurance man, appears with \$1,200 for Pop from a paid-up policy, the question is: shall the old man go to New York on a spree, or will Ethel use the money to buy the big family tombstone which her soul craves? In the end Ethel appears to triumph, but the audience knows that it is the old man's pity which puts the tombstone within her grasp. 50c. (Royalty, \$5.00.)

SUNDAY COSTS FIVE PESOS Comedy

Josephine Niggli. 1 m. 4 f. Ext. Mexican costumes. 50 min. "Sunday Costs Five Pesos" is a comedy of Mexican village life. A young girl, through jealousy, breaks off her engagement, then, repentant, tries to win him back with the aid of some well-meaning friends, who only manage to involve her in further difficulties. Very colourful; a splendid tournament play, and very popular with Canadian casts and audiences. May be performed with an all-feminine cast. 50c. (Royalty, \$5.00.)

THE MAN IN THE BOWLER HAT Comedy

A. A. Milne. 4 m. 2 f. Int. Mod. cost. 30 min. A terribly exciting little affair happens in the humdrum life of John and Mary, a tempest in a teapot, but while it lasts—well, it's high comedy, at least for the audience. 60c. (Royalty, \$5.00.)

DARK BROWN Melodrama

Philip Johnson. 2 m. 5 f. The play happens in the living-room at the back of Arthur Brown's tobacconist shop, in a small town not far from London. Arthur is away on one of the visits which he explains to his wife he is obliged to make at infrequent intervals to an invalid aunt in Eastbourne. An incident occurs which proves that his explanation is false and the suspicion of a sinister reason for his disappearance builds up to such an atmosphere of horror, that he is forced upon his return to tell his wife the grim truth regarding his absences. The play is highly dramatic and represents the best in short contest or festival material. 45c. (Royalty, \$5.00.)

RECOMMENDED

THE FLATTERING WORD, THE HAPPY JOURNEY, ANTIC SPRING, THE CURTAIN, THE SLAVE WITH TWO FACES, THE UGLY DUCKLING, AN IMMORTELLE, THE OLD LADY SHOWS HER MEDALS, A ROOM IN THE TOWER, CHARADE, MASTER DUDLEY, ORANGE BLOSSOM, NOVELETTE.

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WESTERN THEATRE

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The editors will be glad to receive news of theatre events in western Canada and articles on general or practical topics, especially from members of active theatre groups, teachers and students. Photos, drawings, set and costume designs are particularly welcome, also letters containing news or criticism, whether intended for publication or not.



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Song and Dance

First about the emblem now appearing on our "mast-head" and notepaper. It was designed for us by J. B. Taylor of the University of Alberta's Painting Division, and is an authentic representation of a "buffalo dancer" of the not-so-long ago. Since to the Plains Indians of those days the buffalo meant not only food, but clothing and shelter, this particular song and dance was one of the most important and frequently performed of their mimetic rites. Our dancer in his buffalo mask imitating with rhythmic sounds and movements the buffalo hunt itself is therefore a symbol both of the original "theatre" of the western plains and of a dramatic performance that was very close to the interests of the whole community.

The symbolism reaches further. As soon as it became necessary to replenish the supply of buffalo the Indians would start the buffalo dance and keep it up until a herd was sighted. It is said that the dance *never failed*. Sooner or later the buffalo appeared. In this sense our emblem is symbolic of the whole of Canadian Theatre. Sooner or later, if we keep up our little song and dance long enough—if we somehow acquire the unbounded faith and energy of the buffalo dancer—the public will come stampeding to our doors, lured by the "mimetic ritual" within.

We even feel somewhat the same about WESTERN THEATRE. Sooner or later the subscriptions will come flowing in and our song and dance will have been successful. But we think it had better be sooner. *Very soon*, in fact!

For a magazine such as ours can only be based on the co-operation, not only of those for whom theatre happens to be a passion, but also of those for whom it is a pastime. Its success is indissolubly linked with the number of its subscribers, and the interest they take in supplying it with material for publication. If its pages are found to be stimulating and informative, the one way to ensure its continuance is to go out after more subscribers, for it is not merely a matter for individuals, but for groups. Should the contents fail to meet their needs, they must tell us about it. WESTERN THEATRE will only be fulfilling its function when it becomes the mouthpiece of the most active and forward-looking individuals and groups in the west.

With our second number we begin a policy of centering the main articles around a single topic. In this instance we chose the Dominion Drama Festival, because we feel that there will be many westerners who will want to know more about the background of this year's finals in Calgary. The *Winter* number, to appear in March, will concern itself with "Playwriting in the West", and the *Spring* number with "Children's Theatre".

Finally we wish to apologize for the delay in getting out this number. Since we are still in the formative stage and all work is voluntary, a great many problems have continually to be ironed out. And in order to catch up with ourselves we are asking you to pretend that it is still autumn, though it is only too evident that the full fury of winter has descended upon us.

Calgary is Getting Ready

As most westerners surely know by now, Calgary is host to the coming finals of the Dominion Drama Festival during the week of May 8th. Never before have they been held so far west. As a matter of fact, only once since 1933 when they were inaugurated has it been considered possible to hold them outside Ontario. That was in 1938 and the place was Winnipeg.

This festival, therefore, is likely to mark another stage in the development of our Theatre in the West—looking at it for the moment from the western viewpoint only. It is of course a Dominion Festival with all that that implies. But if we westerners sufficiently realize the opportunities that it offers we shall undoubtedly be rewarded both with a better response to theatre on the part of the public and a better standard in the work itself.

The great to-do that accompanies the festival finals—the official functions, speeches, gathering of notables, photographing, and the attention of press and radio—is an enormous boost to the prestige of our theatre. For one short and fervent week it can almost compete with hockey or baseball.

For theatre people themselves it is a place to learn. The festival is described elsewhere in these pages as “The show window for the best work produced in Canada,” which it undoubtedly is, and the standard of that work has been rapidly rising since the war. You will have to go a long way before you can find a more exciting and varied experience in what the theatre has to offer, all compacted into six evening performances and two matinees.

In the day-time the Canadian Theatre Conference provides a series of exhibitions and round table discussions where people from all parts of the country gather together to debate various aspects of Canadian Theatre. Recognized authorities are chosen to lead the discussions, but it is usually open to anyone to ask questions or air his views.

The latest reports from Calgary reveal that its citizens are getting behind the festival in a big way—and Calgary has a reputation for hospitality. Accommodation is being rapidly booked up for the week of May 8th, and we have heard that travelling parties are already being arranged in some localities. We mention this by way of suggestion. Make your plans now.

* * * *

Maxwell Wray, well known English actor and director, who has adjudicated many plays for the British Drama League, is the Regional Adjudicator. He will start the ball rolling in Vancouver on the week of January 16th, and will wend his way eastward to Edmonton for the week of the 23rd, Regina for the week of the 30th and Winnipeg for the week of Feb. 6th.

* * * *

The next two issues of “Western Theatre” (winter and spring) will carry notices of the regional festivals across Canada and of the preparations under way in Calgary.

The Dominion Drama Festival

Its History and Progress

With the kind permission of the Chairman and Honorary Director of the D.D.F. we have prepared this account from the written brief and oral statements which they delivered on behalf of the D.D.F. to the Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts and Sciences.

The Dominion Drama Festival was inaugurated at a meeting called at the instance of the Right Honourable, the Earl of Bessborough, then Governor General of Canada, and held in Government House, Ottawa, on October 29th, 1932. There were present at the meeting about 60 representative men and women interested in the drama from all parts of Canada. An organization was set up, a committee was appointed and it was decided to hold the first Festival at Ottawa in April, 1933. The competitors were to be amateur groups chosen by previous regional competition as representative of the best dramatic work being done in the various parts of Canada. 110 plays were presented in the regional competitions (90 plays in English and 20 in French). The first festival was confined to one act plays and 24 plays were invited to the final festival at Ottawa.

In 1935 the Festival was incorporated by Royal Charter, with its objects defined as being to encourage dramatic art in Canada by the holding of a Dominion Drama Festival and such regional or other subsidiary festivals as may be deemed advisable, and by the granting of prizes and awards for distinctive effort in any of the arts relating to the drama, including the writing of plays, their presentation, mounting, costuming and lighting.

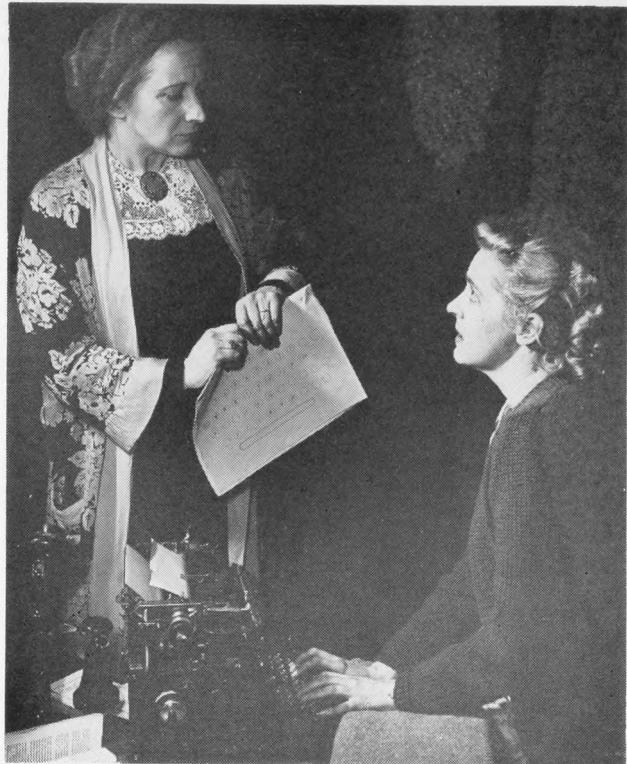
The first Governors of the Festival were nominated by Lord Bessborough. One third retire each year and their successors are appointed by the annual general court of the Governors of the Festival which is held during the final festival. The Governors also appoint an executive committee who are charged with operation of the Festival between annual meetings. Several meetings of the executive committee are held each year and between such meetings responsibility for conduct of the affairs of the Festival rests on the Chairman and Honorary Director.

For the purposes of the Festival, Canada is divided into regions, the boundaries of which are fixed from time to time having regard to convenience of administration and the number of groups desiring to compete in any particular area. A chairman for each region is appointed, and, as such, he is ex officio a member of the executive committee. The regional chairman and his committee have complete charge of the regional festival and determine what groups shall be invited to compete therein.

A special Festival Committee is appointed each year in the city where the final festival is being held to have charge of the same. Invitations to compete in the final festival are in the discretion of the executive committee and are based upon the report of the regional adjudicator having regard to the general standard of presentation across Canada.

One regional adjudicator is sent across Canada to judge all regional festivals and a different adjudicator judges the final festival. The execu-

Verlie Cooter and Yvonne Robinson in "The Glass Menagerie", the Vagabond Players' prize-winning entry in last season's D.D.F. Director— Ian Dobbie.



—Photo: Astray



The Vancouver Little Theatre's production of "Deep are the Roots", with Joe Brockenborough as Lieut. Brett Charles and Lillian Carlson as Alice Langdon. Directed by Ian Dobbie.



Photo: courtesy Mayfair Magazine

"Hedda Gabler", Workshop 14's entry in last season's D.D.F. **At the left**, Betty Mitchell conducting a rehearsal.

Below, during performance on the stage of the Royal Alexandra Theatre, Toronto.



Photo: John Steele, Toronto

tive committee endeavours to secure regional and final adjudicators who are proficient in both French and English.

Regional festivals were held from 1933 to 1939 inclusive, when they were suspended for the duration of the war, commencing again in 1947 and being held each year since. Final festivals were held in Ottawa in 1933, 1934, 1935, 1936, 1937 and 1948, in Winnipeg in 1938, in London in 1939 and 1947, and in Toronto in 1949. The 1950 final festival will be held in Calgary. It is the policy of the executive committee to move the final festival to all parts of Canada.

The importance of the Festival and the success which has attended it since its inception are best described in the words of the Founder of the Festival, the Earl of Bessborough in 1934—"A renaissance of the Drama is taking place in Canada. As the success of the Dominion Drama Festival testifies, it is a widely national movement, attended by the most promising developments and by many good auguries for the future; its value as a permanent institution in the cultural life of this country will, I am confident, become more and more apparent in each succeeding year."

Since its inception, the Dominion Drama Festival has made great progress in the field of community drama in Canada and has continually grown in stature. The more limited one act play has been replaced by the full length play giving greater scope to competitors and more truly representing the best dramatic work in Canada each year. All restrictions on competition by professional actors have been removed. Groups are now invited to the final festival on merit of performance across Canada without regard to regional divisions. French speaking and English speaking Canadians compete together on equal terms not only in the final festival but in the regional festivals. People from every part of Canada are brought together each year with common aims and ideals and get to know and understand each other better. Opportunity has been given to Canadian playwrights to have their work performed. Opportunity has been given to Canadian actors to obtain experience at home and a large field of talent has been made available for summer stock and professional companies in Canada to draw upon. Interest in the theatre has been rekindled and aroused in every part of Canada. The Dominion Drama Festival is now firmly established as a significant national movement in the cultural life of Canada and as a vital element in the integration of our country.

The Festival has done much to create a national Canadian feeling in the world of theatre arts. It is the only drama festival in the world today organized on a national basis. It brings together each year people from all parts of Canada, both French speaking and English speaking with common ideals, providing for an interchange of ideas and an opportunity to know and appreciate one another better. The Festival has done much to add to the variety and richness of Canadian life, from the smallest rural community to the great cities of Canada, by its encouragement of live theatre.

Here are two specific examples. When the Festival was first inaugurated French speaking Canadians competed in separate regional festivals and in many cases with different adjudicators. Now all Canadians, irrespective of language, compete together. Originally the final festivals were held in Ottawa, a bilingual centre. When it was decided to hold such festivals in Winnipeg, London, Toronto and other pre-

dominantly English speaking centers, our French speaking compatriots had some fear as to their reception and equality of recognition in such centres. Not only were their fears groundless, but the presentations in the French language in such centres have done much to increase the knowledge and appreciation of our great bi-lingual culture and have created firm friendships in all parts of Canada between French speaking and English speaking Canadians.

Even in the predominantly English speaking centres mentioned above the attendance at plays produced in the French language has equalled the attendance at plays produced in the English language, and the high standard of presentation of French speaking groups and their great contribution to theatre in Canada has been recognized and widely appreciated. Only because of the final festival held each year are many Canadians able to see outstanding theatre work presented in Canada's two languages and thus to realize the great traditions and culture of the French theatre and of the English theatre.

Another example, and only one of many, was provided when the Clive Dramatic Society from Alberta represented that province in the 1939 final festival at London, and one of its members, Mr. Robert Haskins, a farmer, without previous stage experience, was awarded the prize for the best individual performance by a man at the final festival. The experience of such groups is but one example of what has been done to enrich the lives of many Canadians in small places across Canada.

The theatre knows no class distinction. Persons from every creed and every walk of life can come and join together in a common cultural pursuit, the only admission requirement being that of interest and a will to work together to achieve a common objective. No one who was present will ever forget the thrill and impact of the production of "Waiting for Lefty" (the scene of which is laid in a labor union hall) by Cliffords Odets presented by The Progressive Arts Clubs of Vancouver at the 1936 final festival in Ottawa before the Governor-General, the Prime Minister and a distinguished and international audience.

From its very inception in the days of depression the Dominion Drama Festival has had a unifying influence and has enriched the lives of thousands of Canadians in every part of Canada.

Before the last war the Dominion Drama Festival had been invited to send a group to England to present a play in the British Drama League Festival and arrangements were under way to take up such an invitation in 1940 when the war intervened. Requests have been received from time to time to present plays in the United States and inquiries have been received as to the possibility of giving presentations in France.

As an instance of the recognition of the Dominion Drama Festival internationally, one might mention the fact that actors winning awards at its festivals have been admitted to outstanding theatre schools in England without trying the usual entrance examination, and the Government of France has granted several scholarships for the study of the theatre in Paris to outstanding French-speaking actors and directors in our festivals. And this year the Dominion Drama Festival was invited to send a Canadian group to present a play at the Edinburgh International Music and Drama Festival. The invitation was accepted, and the Ottawa Drama League, one of Canada's outstanding community

theatre groups, presented "Eros at Breakfast," by a Canadian author, Mr. Robertson Davies of Peterborough.

Paralleling the development of the Dominion Drama Festival is that of other amateur and professional groups, of summer theatres, or repertory groups, and of touring companies, from all of which a National Canadian Theatre will emerge. As to when it will emerge, depends upon the support given to organizations such as the Dominion Drama Festival, to community theatres, and to professional theatre. It will not emerge from any community or voluntary effort alone. It depends upon encouragement of the professional theatre, upon giving playwrights opportunities for the presentation of their work and upon giving an adequate opportunity and reasonable remuneration to those who have the ability and skill to warrant their full time work in the theatre.

The Dominion Drama Festival, in addition to being the show window for the best work produced in Canada, should be a stepping stone to a career in the theatre for those who are qualified and desire to make it their life work. A permanent company or companies should be established in Canada, to provide the necessary employment and opportunity. Such a company would encourage writing for the Canadian theatre and provide an opportunity for presentation of Canadian plays. Such a company could tour the principal centres of Canada and bring to all communities examples of theatre at its best in Canada. It would also be available to represent the Canadian theatre in the international sphere if required. The trained personnel of such a company would also be a valuable asset for summer theatre schools and other off season activities. The Dominion Drama Festival should be considered as part of a progressive scheme of development of the theatre in Canada, and not as the be all and end all of a national effort in the field of drama.

The Vagabond Players of New Westminster at the Festival

The following is from a written account presented to the Western Canada Theatre Conference:

Although the Vagabonds are a small group, they were serious enough to want to put their production in the hands of a professional director, Ian Dobbie, who had recently come to Canada from the British Theatre.

The play, "The Glass Menagerie" by Tennessee Williams was chosen by the director from a list which the play selection committee had themselves chosen from a number of suggestions sent by the Department of University Extension at U.B.C.

As with most organizations of this nature rehearsal space was a problem that never ceased to plague them. There was seldom enough room in a private home. Something approximating the size of the actual stage was essential since the lighting plan was important and movements had to be timed to coincide with lighting changes. There were four areas of light and one hundred and eighty-five lighting cues. In the end, this all proved a greater problem than originally anticipated since the stages used in New Westminster and Vancouver were greatly different in size to that at the Royal Alexandra Theatre in Toronto.

In order to finance the entry into the B.C. Regional Festival in Vancouver, two performances were given in New Westminster shortly before. The festival performance went without a hitch, even though the electrician never saw the stage and worked entirely on cues given by the stage manager. And to keep the stage crew to a minimum the two male members of the cast themselves operated the off stage musical and sound effects.

The Vagabonds consider that Robert Speight, the adjudicator, was extremely kind to all concerned. He found fault, he said, only with the fact that a portrait on the wall of "that gallantly smiling gentleman" was not smiling. Hence the adjudication left them a little bewildered since they felt that there were many points of criticism that could have been made and that might have helped in later performances. They felt too that the official invitation to participate in the final festival should not have come so close to the date of that festival, because of the time needed to raise money and make adequate preparation. There was much to be done. The income from the first three performances had been \$342, the expenses \$340; so profits to date were \$2.00.

A festival committee was appointed, the business manager of which was charged with devising ways and means of raising \$3,000. This was done mostly by public subscription, and through the moral and financial support of the New Westminster City Council. Clubs, organizations and large business firms were all approached by mail and then by personal visits. The local radio station and newspaper gave generously of time and space. A special performance was given at the Edison Theatre, a local movie house which possesses the only stage of any size. This realized \$200 for the fund, after deducting from receipts (among other things) a rental of \$250 for the one performance. However, this not only helped to publicize the fund, but gave the cast and crew a chance to work on a stage approaching the Royal Alexandra's in size.

Because certain members of the cast were employed in jobs from which they could not be absent too long, the cast of four and crew of two were flown to Toronto and back. The director went with them and, with his knowledge of stagecraft, proved quite indispensable. The production was planned to take place on three levels, so they took their platforms with them to make sure they would be working on a stage of familiar size and design.

Everyone was very impressed with the way the Drama Festival arrangements were worked out by the Toronto committee. The Vagabonds wish to go on record as commending the Toronto organizers, and extending their congratulations and thanks. The envelope containing passes, invitations, booklets and schedules, which everyone received on registration, helped to keep them on the right track and completely informed for every moment of their stay.

The enthusiastic interest shown in amateur dramatics during the festival has given the Vagabonds an impetus to carry on a much broader programme of activities. They feel that the performances and productions they saw there augur well for the future of Drama and allied arts in Canada. But they also feel that interest in Canadian Drama must be promoted in the average man in the average city. The Dominion Festival with its publicity on a national scale can be an important means of fostering this interest. It might be possible to go further, as one member of the Vagabonds has suggested, and arrange a national tour for the winning play in each year.

Stanley's Story

ALIX STEEN

Stanley is a rural district six miles east of Moosomin. It boasts of two one-room schools: the old school, converted into a community hall, and a new red brick building. When the school population increased to about forty-eight, several years ago, the old school had to be once more turned into a classroom. It was there that our high school dramatics came into being.

Each year a Christmas concert is presented. Four years ago we put on a one-act play as the high school's contribution to the annual Christmas concert. I blush to give the title of this play for, although it was very entertaining and well done, I realize now that it was not particularly well chosen. A few weeks after its presentation I happened to pick up a Saskatchewan Trustee magazine, where I noticed an announcement of the Trustees' Drama Festival, the like of which I did not know existed. There was an article in it by Mr. Heane (who had charge of drama for the Trustees' Association), urging high schools to enter the Festival. Accompanying this article was one by Mrs. Mary Ellen Burgess, giving a very clear and comprehensive outline of the fundamentals of high school drama.

I knew nothing of such things as "grouping," "pacing," "climax" and "mimetic interpretation"; but this little article made many things seem so clear and interesting that I was sorely tempted to make application for entry. It seemed a very bold thing to do since I knew nothing about drama; I had never taken part in a dialogue in my life! I did not know whether my application would be considered, as the play was not on the "approved" list. However, unknown to the pupils, I entered our play in the Festival; but once that letter was posted I would have given anything to have had it back.

When time passed and no word was received I banished the whole affair from my mind. Imagine my consternation about six weeks later when Mr. Heane telephoned me from long distance and told me to rent a hall and make all arrangements to hold the zone festival here in Moosomin. I managed to gasp: "But our play has not been accepted." He assured me that it had and that he had written me long ago to that effect. I was so non-plussed that I could not find words to tell him that I lived miles from town, that the weather was extremely cold, the roads next to impassable and that I knew next to nothing about how a Drama Festival was run. By the time I "came to" Mr. Heane had rung off having taken my silence for consent.

When I went back to my class-room and told the pupils what I had done, I expected them to be as alarmed as I; but no, they seemed to think it would be most exciting. Oh, youth!!! I telephoned the Secretary of our Parent-Teachers' Association and said: "Call a meeting as soon as possible. I need help and need it badly." As usual, the parents (fathers as well as mothers) answered my call, and turned up in num-

ers. I explained the situation to them, and they said: "Tell us what you want done, and we'll do it." Committees were chosen to look after the renting of the hall, the scenery, the advertising, the arrangements for the dance—for we felt that if we were to get a crowd we would have to inveigle them with a dance, a drama festival being something new here and not likely to attract too large a crowd. The fathers volunteered for ticket-selling duty, carrying water for tea, etc., while the mothers arranged to bring sandwiches and cake, meet the adjudicator and arrange for her hotel accommodation.

Then, with the aid of this little article by Mrs. Burgess, I began to brush up my play. The festival was only three days away, when our leading lady was whisked away to the hospital for an appendectomy. What should I do? My first and second impulses were to call the whole thing off for it was such an easy way out. But the children seemed so let down that I sat down and thought the whole thing over. Why not to take Irene out of her minor role, give her the leading part, and put someone else in her place? But I didn't have another girl, our enrolment being very small! So I dashed madly to the public school, looked the situation over and, pointing to one of the girls there, I said: "You, Inga, have got to help us out of a jam." Had I announced to her that she was to be shot at sunrise I'm sure she could not have been more startled. However, she threw back her shoulders, swallowed a couple of times and accompanied me back to our class-room. When I showed the poor little girl the script, and what she must learn within the next day or two, her heart almost failed her—my own was in my shoes. However, she said she would try.

The next day she came to school looking as if she hadn't slept very much, but she had a good idea of her lines. We moved the desks back and chalked on the floor a "stage" the size of the one we were to use on Monday (this was Friday). We went into town the next day, cold and stormy though it was, and spent the afternoon in the cold town hall rehearsing on the stage. Things went very badly, of course, and the children felt that they should have another rehearsal to try and get the feel of the stage. It was their very first experience on an acting area larger than about twelve feet by fifteen so they felt rather lost. I stayed overnight at the hotel, keeping Inga with me for I knew she could not "take" a long drive home in the cold Saturday night and back again on Sunday. (Yes, Sunday! May my sins be forgiven!) Another long grind, and a long drive home. One of the parents, by the way, offered to drive the older members of the cast in to town for our Sunday rehearsal.

Next day was the Festival. Shall I ever forget! Butterflies in my tummy, heart in my mouth and spirits very low. However, the words of that silly song kept ringing in my ears, "Laugh, clown, laugh," so I did my best to let the pupils see that drama festivals and the like were just all in the day's work. Eight p.m.—zero hour! Up behind stage came the adjudicator, all smiles and sunshine. You can't tell me Mrs. Burgess didn't know exactly how we all felt! Inside of two minutes, however, the children were at ease, one even going so far as to say, when Mrs. Burgess left: "She's nice. I don't think I'm going to be a bit frightened."

I shall never forget the next two hours. I aged at least ten years. But I was a mighty excited and happy person when Mrs. Burgess an-

nounced that we were the winners. When I stopped to realize that winning meant we should go on to Regina to the semi-finals, I wished I might drop dead. Mrs. Burgess took the winning casts downstairs to the Council Chambers, and until the early hours of the morning tore our plays apart and put them together again. She did it in such a kindly way that we loved it, and she had the boys and girls practically jumping through hoops for her.

After several weeks of very hard work, putting or trying to put into effect the things our adjudicator had told us, we sallied forth to Regina to the semi-finals. The group put on a very good show, making a good job of a poor play, but once we saw the Gravelbourg Players in "Joint Owners in Spain" we knew our chances were very slim. I should like to mention, however, that Inga, our little "pinch-hitter," stole the show and received special commendation. It was disappointing but not discouraging, for Mrs. Burgess and Mr. Heane were there to help us over the next half-hour after the decision and to bolster up our spirits. We came home much sadder and wiser than before.

I saw that in order to get anywhere I had to do a little studying. I had always been interested in drama, but only on the "receiving" end. The next year we chose the Mexican play, "Sunday Costs Five Pesos." Here we had a play of which I was not ashamed, which the children loved and which Mrs. Burgess had recommended to us. I persuaded the Teachers Local at Moosomin to sponsor the zone festival this year. There were about eight entries instead of two.

Several weeks before the festival I went to the Town Council and asked if I might take an old set of scenery which was discarded, patch it up and paint it. I was granted permission, so the gang and I went into town and spent hours painting our three houses necessary for the production of the play. It was our first experience painting scenery, but we had a glorious time and produced what we considered a rather smart set. Imagine our chagrin when, the day before the festival, we were informed that we could not use our scenery as it would take too long to change it between plays. Such a blow! I could not see "Sunday Costs Five Pesos" being played with interior scenery. But next morning I was met at the school gate by two very serious-looking boys: one was in charge of scenery and the other was our male actor. They asked permission to drive into town and fix both sets of scenery with hooks and eyes or what-have-you, so that the scenery could be changed in very short order. I gave permission and they received the blessing of the gentleman in charge of the festival; if they could show that the Mexican scenery could be taken down and the interior put up in ten minutes, we could use it. Imagine how those boys slaved and practiced so that they could do it in eight!

The opposition at this zone festival was pretty deadly, two of the plays being directed by experienced Saskatchewan Drama League members. However, we managed to nose out again, and again received sufficient funds to take us to Regina. This time, much to our joy, we played in Darke Hall (one of my dreams realized). The girls and boy put on a grand show and I was terrifically proud of them. We received honourable mention. At the reception afterwards for the casts, directors and those particularly interested in drama, I was prouder still when I stood back and watched my girls and boy chatting away with different people, as much at ease with university professors and other drama

enthusiasts as if they had always known them. How different from the group of frightened youngsters of a year ago.

Last year, upon the suggestion of Mrs. Burgess, we tried "The Case of the Weird Sisters" with an all-girl cast. This was necessary as I had only one boy among my nine pupils and he had an impediment in his speech. How we worked on this play! All our rehearsing was done during the noon hour as the pupils were needed at home after school. As soon as the last bite of lunch was eaten all hands cleared the desks out of the way and rehearsing began. Why the children did not rebel against such hard work I shall never know. I believe, though, it was because they had learned to love drama and were as anxious as I to do a good job.

We presented our play at the Christmas concert and then laid it away until two weeks before the zone festival. We again took the zone; and again the semi-finals were in Darke Hall, Regina, but it held none of the awe for us that it had done previously. But from the time we left home until the second evening when we were on the stage everything went wrong. Goodness, what a time! I was sure the girls would never pull through. From the moment the curtain rose, however, until it fell forty minutes later everything went beautifully. When the curtain fell on Judy's last line I believe I must have passed out for I remember nothing until the girls were crowded around me asking, "How did we do?"

Professor Edmunds was the adjudicator, and a grand job he did—not because he gave us the Southern Saskatchewan championship but because he left all the players with so much to think about.

After the reception following the adjudication I phoned back home. Word had already spread over the district like wildfire so that when we arrived home on the noon train the next day the folks (big and little) were all there from Stanley to welcome us.

Saskatoon in a few short days for the finals! We were to compete against Bedford Road Collegiate. But we had used up all our funds on the Regina trip. Again the Parent-Teachers' Association convened. They dug down, very deep this time, and put up the money, enough to furnish us with sleepers both ways on the train and hotel rooms at the Bessborough. The Trustees' Convention was on at the same time so we were accompanied to Saskatoon by our own chairman and his wife and several others from adjoining districts.

At Saskatoon we were given every consideration and much assistance by Professor Kenneth Gordon, Mr. Heane and Mrs. Burgess. The nicest thing that happened was when the two afore-mentioned gentlemen came in with a cheque for one hundred dollars from the Saskatchewan Drama League to help defray our expenses.

Professor Jones of the University of Saskatchewan was the adjudicator. I believe the audience received quite a surprise (not expecting much from a little rural school) for the girls again put on a "magnificent performance," and we were given the cup for the Provincial title. Each and everyone of us, even the prompter and sound-effects girl, was given a beautiful volume of plays, this being another contribution of Mr. Heane's towards drama.

It was most exciting to be called to the stage before a very large crowd to receive the award while cameras clicked and folks clapped

and cheered. But the happiest moment was on our arrival home, when we found a large crowd awaiting us from town as well as country. We were presented with flowers. We were taken in cars down the main street, each window of which contained large placards with the words, "Moosomin Congratulates Stanley High School, Provincial Drama Winners." We were entertained at the Public Dining Hall, the Mayor, the Presidents of the Board of Trade, Chamber of Commerce, Emcees, Drama Club and so on, each giving a little speech. The newspaperman was on hand with his camera, and everything was done that could be done to show us that our efforts were appreciated.

Our fame had spread abroad, and invitations came from many adjoining towns to put on our play. We finally decided to put on a whole evening's entertainment at these various places. So, with our high school play, a public school play, several musical numbers, tap dancing exhibitions, Indian club swinging and physical training demonstrations, we set out "on tour" in the spring. We cleared enough to pay back all those who had contributed towards our Saskatoon trip, and had a little left over.

Now, we had to defend the cup. We had always done comedy before, so I decided to take a try at something entirely different. Several new players were added, and away we went on another play.

There was no competition here, and we were obliged to go to Regina, right into the finals without benefit of an adjudication. However, we came out with honourable mention and the cup for the best actress. We had to borrow the money for this trip from the School Board and the Parent-Teachers' Association, but by going "on tour" again this summer with our show we were able to pay it all back.

And where shall we go now? I don't know. Time will tell. I should like to see a very large, non-competitive festival in this area this winter. I must bestir myself and see what I can do about it. There must be many other young people who would appreciate a chance to give drama a try. If competitive festivals have lessened their chances here I am now all for non-competitive work. Drama should be fun. In competitive work it is fun—for the winners; but it can be very disheartening for the losers. I know all about that.

To what or whom do we owe our success? Firstly, I must give a great deal of credit to Mrs. Burgess who gave so freely of her time and talent to assist us in every way possible. Next come the pupils who were not afraid of good hard work, who were as anxious to do a good job as I, and whose ambitions seem to run along the same lines as my own. They took direction beautifully, and above all appreciated the opportunity afforded them. I must not forget the parents who were behind us every foot of the way with assistance, encouragement and appreciation. Many was the mile driven in extremely cold weather, over bad roads, to take us in to town for rehearsals, for festivals, to catch trains and meet them, and when spring came, to take us to various towns to put on our shows. Our School Board, too, comes in for special mention, for they spared no pains or expense to see that every opportunity was given us to continue our educational career in drama. With so many good friends and helpers, how could we have failed?

The Vancouver Little Theatre *Past and Present*

JESSIE RICHARDSON

A meeting of the semi-literary club called the "Vagabonds" in a private home in Vancouver in April 1921 to discuss the reading of plays as part of the activities of its members has now become historical. This meeting proved to be the embryo of what is probably the senior Little Theatre in Canada in point of view of continuous performance, for when, as an outcome of further meetings, it was decided that plays would not only be read but produced, The Vancouver Little Theatre Association was born. Mr. Robey Reid was the first president, and many of the people who were at those first meetings are still either active or audience members of the organization.

The first production was an evening of one act plays given in the Templeton Hall on September 21, 1921. One of the plays was "Lonesome Like." After two years in Templeton Hall (where "Dear Brutus" was the last production to be staged) the association bought their present building on Commercial Drive, the "York Theatre," where all Little Theatre plays have since been shown. This is the only theatre of "intimate" size in Vancouver; it holds only 449.

The Association is now starting its 29th season. There have been five major productions a year without a break, except for one year when only four plays were produced. The reaction of members to this change was not at all favourable and the full schedule has ever since been maintained.

Many outstanding productions have been shown at the present theatre, such as: "R.U.R.," "Outward Bound"; "Idiot's Delight"; "Tobias and the Angel"; "Elizabeth the Queen," in which, as Elizabeth, Joan Miller won the award as the best actress in Canada in the Dominion Drama Festival of 1934; "Lady Precious Stream"; "Arsenic and Old Lace"; "Flight to the West"; "Fear"; and, coming closer to date, "Pygmalion"; "Pickup Girl"; "Deep are the Roots"; "For Love or Money" and "Angel Street." In the last mentioned play Aileen Seaton won the award for the best actress. In the first year of the Dominion Drama Festival the Little Theatre's "Back to Metuselah" won the Festival Plaque.

Apart from the theatre the organization has always had a workshop in town where rehearsals other than final rehearsals are held and costumes, properties and at times scenery are made or assembled. The locale of the workshop has changed many times, but the present address is 603 W. Hastings where the office is also located. There are a lot of steps to climb to the fourth floor and many of our older members find them a bit too much, so we live in hope of finding a permanent workshop on the ground level.

For twenty-eight years the membership fee has been five dollars. In return for this the members received six vouchers to be exchanged for seat tickets to the major productions. This season, because of the increased cost of productions, only five vouchers will be given for the five dollars, but the membership still entitles one to participate in all activities within the organization including workshop productions.

At the annual meeting members vote for a Board composed of a president, a vice-president, an honorary secretary, treasurer, and six officers. The immediate past president stays on the Board for one year after his or her term of office expires. Officers for the 1949-50 season are: President, H. J. K. Van Norman; Vice-President, Dorothy Peck; Hon. Secretary, Dorothy Darling; Treasurer, E. Cooke; Board Members, Marjorie Entwistle, Jessie Richardson, Bill Ivey, Doug. Purvis, Hugh Meldrum and Steve Close. Don Cromie is the immediate Past President. Executive Secretary is Norma McMillan.

This year with twenty-eight years of practically all voluntary work behind us (having had a paid secretary for short periods only), it was felt that the V.L.T.A. had come to the cross-roads and that we were standing still rather than progressing. It seemed no longer possible for people to give unlimited time to the theatre as they had in the past. Therefore the sensible thing would seem to be to appoint a professional, full time producer-director whose duty it would be (among other things to see that all productions were staged. This would in no way take away the right of members to direct plays but would ensure that the job would be done if no member director were available. So Mr. Ian Dobbie was appointed full time director-producer for one year, the contract to be renewed if the experiment proved a success. The organization also has a part time, paid secretary for this season.

The twenty-ninth season opened in October with "Quiet Weekend" by Elsa McCracken and directed by Ian Dobbie. The second production was "Candida" by George Bernard Shaw, directed by Christine Chanter and played November 21 to 25. A children's play, "The Magic Elephant" by Kathryn Marcuse, was produced between Christmas and the New Year; Mrs. Marcuse is a local authoress writing scripts for children's plays for the C.B.C. Margaret Cunningham directed this production as she did last year's Christmas play, "Pinocchio" for the V.L.T.A. Mr. Dobbie will direct our Dominion Drama Festival entry, "An Ideal Husband" by Oscar Wilde.

All members of the V.L.T.A. are looking forward to an outstanding season this year and are interestedly watching the working of the new policy to see what bearing it will have on the future of the organization. There is one thing that is very sure: the Vancouver Little Theatre is deeply rooted in the foundations of the city of Vancouver, and many of the city's sons and daughters who are earning their living in all branches of the theatre in other parts of the world got their training in this organization.

What the V.L.T.A. really wants from Santa Claus is a new theatre situated around Broadway and Granville, seating about five hundred, and with adequate office, dressing room and workshop space so that all productions can be staged to the best advantage.

Outstanding people who have been associated with the Vancouver Little Theatre and who are now famous in the theatre world, either in

continued on page 28

... And a Word from the Director

IAN DOBBIE

Illustrated by Grace Manson



"tears ...



... or ecstasy"

At the opening of its 28th Season, the Vancouver Little Theatre Association appointed me its first fulltime paid professional Producer-Director. The term Producer-Director is used because I am expected to produce each of the seven major productions the Association presents this season and may be called upon to direct all or some of them. Thus member directors are not prevented from directing and should they wish to do so they will have a professional producer to assist them. It seems possible that this appointment—of a type common in the United States and unheard of in the United Kingdom—may have created a precedent in Canada. Certainly it is an experiment. Some members have claimed it fatal to the Little Theatre spirit, but a vast majority have hailed it as a major step forward for the theatre in Western Canada. Personally, I firmly believe it to be a turning point, and as such it may interest other groups to know just what problems the Board of the Vancouver Little Theatre Association and its members have had to consider.

With six hundred members, the Association has always been the largest—and almost always the most enterprising—west of the Rockies. It has reached a point where the enthusiasm and aspirations of its acting members (as distinct from its audience members) demand a more exacting administration than unpaid volunteers are able to give it. The Executive Board remains intact. No one man can, or at any rate should, control every department of a theatre. But the Board hopes to be relieved of a mass of practical detail and thus devote its time to guiding the policy of the Theatre. It will be my job to translate that policy into practice. The Board is also relieved of an endless, disheartening search for that rare animal in Vancouver—a director readily available for the next play. But the most formidable task both the Board and myself have to face is the reconciliation between an "amateur" Board and a professional Director. The Board consists of a number of duly elected Association members who

are called upon to work much too hard because their interest lies in the theatre as a recreation. They are not theatre-business people. Their Director is a young man who was trained in England and has had a number of years' experience in stock, touring companies and the West End of London. He has also been a Theatre owner-director. I feel that of the two, Board and Director, the greater adjustment has been made by me—but the Board might not agree. The prejudice the British professional holds against the amateur is deep rooted. And my contract states that I must operate within the existing structure of the Little Theatre. The Board on the other hand is faced with a Director who is anxious to dash ahead with new ideas, turning the place upside down in the process, who cannot see why the Board should wish to restrict his theatrical activities outside the Little Theatre, and who wants to work the entire membership into a state of physical and mental collapse! It is surprising that the Board and I have remained good friends. But we have. And the season is in full swing.

The problems do not, however, finish when the Board Meeting closes. A vast and varied membership has to be considered. It has struck me very forcibly that there are, broadly speaking, two distinct types of amateur theatre member quite apart from the purely audience member. The type who works hard in the theatre as a recreation and wants to have fun without being too intense, and second the type who works with the object of learning enough to earn a living on the stage. The latter is a simple proposition.

He or she can be bullied, bawled out, and virtually beaten up. The result will probably be tears or ecstasy—or both. But the former needs delicate handling. I live in mortal fear of getting my types mixed and seeing some old and valued member throw down the paint brush or stamp out of a rehearsal and take up billiards.

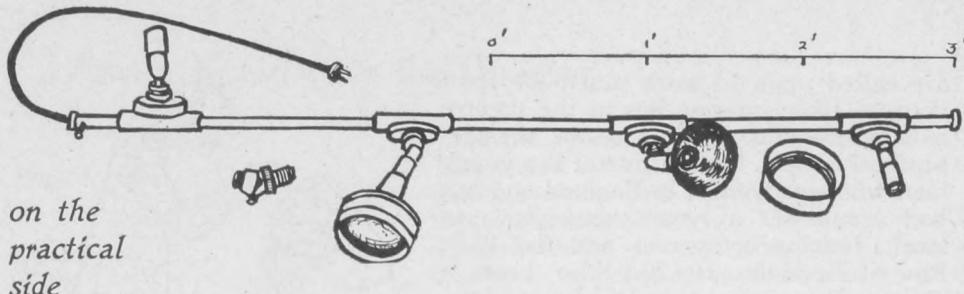
Before this article reaches you, the Little Theatre School will be under way. Its exact form is still under discussion, but my sincere hope is that we shall not take our member's money in return for a course of talks on "How to be an Actor in Six Easy Lessons." This School must have its own outlet distinct from the outlet now offered to the "old and valued member" type (male and female). The possibility of a permanent company running concurrently with the seven productions of the season looms on the horizon. And with it, we hope, the dawn of something new and greater in the Little Theatre.



"Old and valued member . . ."



. . . takes up billiards



on the
practical
side

Portable Light Unit

FRANK HOLROYD

The accompanying drawing shows one of the six units, that, together with four baby spots and a portable switchboard, made up the lighting equipment carried by the Western Stage Society's Summer-touring players.

The unit is five feet six inches long over all. All the parts are shown, and how they are assembled. The parts are obtainable practically anywhere and are comparatively cheap. The flexible metal sockets (Price, \$3.25 ea.), were substituted for the cheaper porcelain kind (shown detached) which depreciated very quickly.

Four Standard R. 40 spot-or flood-lights, 200Va (Price, \$1.35 ea.) were used in each unit. Two of these are shown in place: one is wearing its colour-cap (Price, 65c.) the other's colour cap is detached. The dense glass roundels which come with these were removed, and gelatine colour-media used in their place (Price, 25c. per sheet; 20 in. \times 24 in.) affixed with Scotch tape, which withstands the heat of the lamp.

The pipe is made up of short lengths of ordinary $\frac{1}{2}$ in. conduit (Price, 31c. per

ft.) screwed into metal receptacle boxes known as $\frac{1}{2}$ in. Condulet and lampholder (Price \$1.77 ea.) As the shoulders of these receptacles are porcelain, they were protected from breakage by a few wrappings of electrician's tape.

The short length of conduit at each end was drilled, and a heavy wire was passed through, bent to form an eye on each side of the conduit. This made it possible to hang the unit from any convenient nail, or hook, for use as a vertical strip-light: or to hang it horizontally when used for overhead lighting. The unit was also laid on the stage-floor and used for footlights. It can be used for many purposes, always bearing in mind, however, that the lamps get very hot, and must be kept clear of draperies or anything inflammable.

The wiring ends in three feet of rubber-covered #14 (28c. per ft.) cable with a male plug (25c.) for connection to the feed cable from the switchboard.

The separate parts or the complete assembly can be obtained, in Saskatchewan, from the Wheaton Electric Company Ltd., Saskatoon.

Western Canada Theatre Conference

The Conference again held its annual meeting at Banff during the closing days of the Banff School of Fine Arts. There were about 30 members in attendance, having come from each of the four western provinces. Interesting talks and discussions were held on a variety of topics affecting the development of the theatre in the west, the most outstanding of which was an address by Dr. Evangeline Macklin on "The Need for Speech Training in Western Canada." Dr. Evangeline Macklin is a prominent instructor in speech now teaching in New York, but originally from New Brunswick. Her talk will appear in full in the next issue of "Western Theatre."

The following officers of the W.C.T.C. were elected for the ensuing year: Presi-

dent, Mr. George Werier, Winnipeg; vice-president, Mrs. Jessie Richardson, Vancouver; secretary-treasurer, Professor K. W. Gordon, Saskatoon.

The Conference's annual play-writing competition was again adjudicated by Charles Rittenhouse of Montreal. The winners were:

First Prize: "Growth" by Lynn Grant of Vancouver.

Second Prize: "To-Night of All Nights" by Eric Candy of Edmonton.

These plays can be obtained at 15c a copy from the Department of Extension of the University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta. They may be produced royalty free for one year from the date of award.

MANITOBA

PROVINCIAL FESTIVAL AT BRANDON

News from the various groups in rural Manitoba is scarce at this time of year, but the interest shown in the Eleventh Provincial Festival held on June 2nd, 3rd and 4th of this year augurs well for the season to come. In June, Winnipeg was celebrating its 75th birthday and it was impossible to secure accommodation in any theatre for the finals. Through the good offices of Mrs. G. R. Rowe of Brandon, executive member of the Manitoba Drama League, the Brandon Little Theatre very graciously came to the rescue and agreed to sponsor a festival to be held in the City Hall Auditorium, Brandon, on the dates mentioned above. Mrs. J. Secter acted as Festival Chairman and Mr. Frank Morrise, Drama Critic of the Winnipeg Free Press was Adjudicator. There were eight entries representing winners from seven district festivals and the Earl Oxford Junior High School by special invitation. The Swan River Dramatic Society was awarded the Free Press Shield for its presentation of "Balm" by Merrill Dennison, with two of its players, Esme Cellcott and Martha Griffin sharing the honors as "best actress" of the festival. The play was directed by Mrs. Ida M. Lamb. Swan River district deserved this honor in more ways than one as it was the only district in Manitoba to carry on throughout the war years. The award for best actor went to young Bill White of the Hartney High School for his characterization of Elmer Collier in "Elmer" by Beatrice McNeil. This play was also judged the best High School entry in the festival. The award for best supporting role went to another young lad, Gale Hamilton in the Earl Oxford Junior High School's presentation of Act I of "The Big Help" by Jean Kerr.

MANITOBA DRAMA LEAGUE

On Friday, June 3rd, at 1 o'clock a luncheon was held at the Prince Edward Hotel for executive members, representatives from Manitoba Drama League districts and any other interested persons. Reports were given covering the past season's work and the following Executive was appointed: President, Mr. Robert Jarman; Vice-President, Miss Mary Hamilton; Recording Secretary, Mr. Donald Pope. Corresponding Secretary, Miss Norrie Duthie, and Treasurer, Mr. George L.

Broderson. At the tea hour of the same afternoon the Brandon Little Theatre entertained in honor of the participants in the Festival.

The Manitoba Drama League held its first executive meeting in Winnipeg on September 24th. With the Dominion Drama Regional Festival so much earlier this year in the West this matter was given a prominent place on the agenda, as too were plans for again holding short courses in drama in country districts with the co-operation of the Physical Fitness Division of the Department of Public Health and Welfare. This plan received enthusiastic support last year, and it is hoped that more teams will be able to go out this year, giving instruction in all phases of the drama.

WINNIPEG GROUPS

The various Winnipeg groups are in the process of organizing for 1949-50. Details are not yet available covering all groups, but the **Winnipeg Little Theatre** have announced their programme. They had a most successful first season last year following the reorganization of the Little Theatre, and it is anticipated that as a result of this the membership will be greatly increased. Rehearsals are already in progress for Robert E. Sherwood's comedy "Reunion in Vienna" which will be presented in October, with Mr. J. M. Sinclair as Director. Other productions to be presented by this group during the season will be "The Second Mrs. Tanqueray" by Sir Arthur Wing Pinero, "Man and Superman" by George Bernard Shaw, and "Our Town" by Thornton Wilder. Members' nights will also be revived, for productions of an experimental nature and to aid in the development of new directing talent. Play reading groups are also in the process of formation.

The Teachers' Dramatic Society, The Winnipeg Dramatic Society, *Le Cercle Molière*, and The Students' Union Dramatic Society (of the University of Manitoba) have embarked on active programs for this season. We shall be recording their work in greater detail in the next number.

Manitoba drama lovers are very happy to welcome home **Mmé. Pauline Boutil**, director of *Le Cercle Molière*, after a year's sojourn in her native France.

SASKATCHEWAN

UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN

The Birth of a Playhouse

The '48 Summer School Drama class at the University of Saskatchewan consisted of thirty-six students, all teachers except two high school students attending on scholarships. The course was Drama 2, Stagecraft.

The students were fortunate in that, by the long arm of coincidence (Churchill's kind), they arrived just as the preliminary construction work had been completed on a new experimental theatre. Partitions between the classrooms had been removed, administration offices built, the stage floor laid, and "flying" space had been contrived between the roof-trusses. Workshop equipment had been shifted almost intact into new premises immediately behind, and opening on the stage.

From this point the class took over the project of decorating the auditorium and equipping the stage-house with an adjustable proscenium, traveller and draw curtains, rigging, pin-rail, sheaves, head-blocks, etc., and, of course, a flexible lighting system.

This was done during the laboratory part of the course, in addition to the usual laboratory work in make-up and scene construction.

The non-arrival of certain U.S. manufactured hardware threatened to spoil the finale, but thanks to the efforts of our Customs agent this disaster was averted during the last week of the session, and the students had the satisfaction of seeing their summer's work culminate in "Open House", a display of models, papier-mâché work, props, etc., and, on the stage a well-lighted exterior set, complete with sky-cloth, gauze drop, set tree and what have you, "discovered" periodically during the afternoon whenever the tapestry draw-curtains were parted.

The draw curtains and traveller were the pride and joy of the class. In course of construction the whole thing was nicknamed "The Unpredictable", being made from homely household articles, but when it was put to the test it worked: the curtains bear the signatures of the class on a series of crests worked into the design.

The new Greystone Theatre at the University of Saskatchewan has a twofold function: to provide laboratories for all courses in Drama offered at the University of Saskatchewan, and to present regular programs of the best possible stage and film productions.

The beginnings of this program must of necessity be small. This season it is hoped that a subscription series of three plays will be presented, one in November, another in January and the last in February.

While presenting this series of plays, the Greystone Theatre will also investigate, plan and prepare for a greater number of stage productions and the showing of unusual films. Eventually, it is hoped that the Greystone Theatre will provide a theatre service at the University of Saskatchewan running from the first of October to the first of March with a play or a film being presented for three or four days each and every week. This will involve a fairly large organization, making use of an increased permanent staff and a great deal of voluntary work on the part of groups of players formed among the students, the faculty, alumni and townspeople.

REGINA LITTLE THEATRE

The Regina Little Theatre started their fall activities with a "Little Theatre Week" when members and new members were invited to attend, buy their memberships, fill out registration cards, read for parts in one or three-act plays, present skits, stunts, improvisations, observe a display of miniature stages of productions, subscribe to theatre magazines, and enjoy a social hour and have lunch. Allen Rumbelow and Mrs. Clements were convenors of this project.

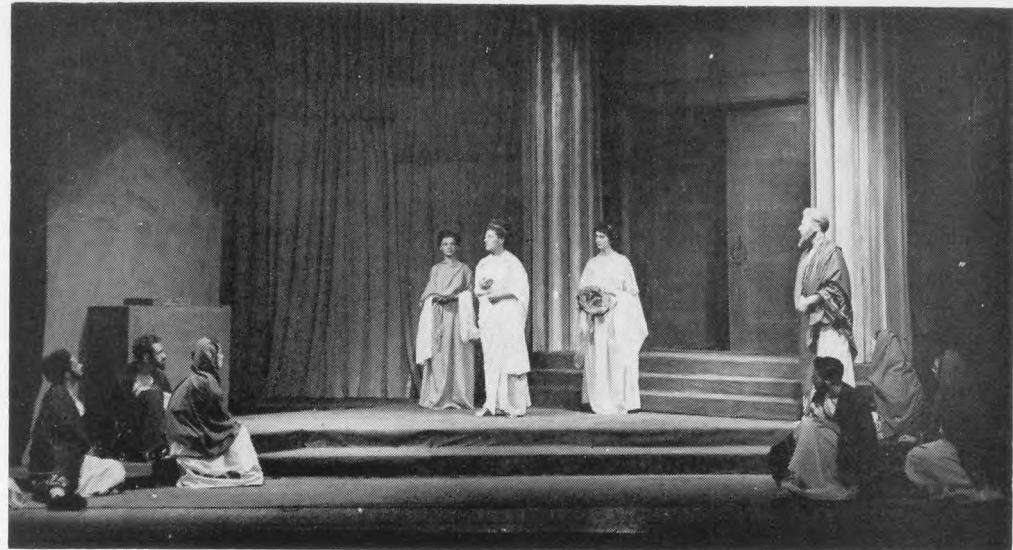
The first major performance was under the direction of Mrs. Kay Kritzwiser, the second to be directed by Mrs. Hilda Allen. It was decided that the D.D.F. entry would be chosen from the first two productions, with Mrs. Clements being invited to produce the one-act Canadian play for the Sir Barry Jackson competition.

MOOSE JAW LITTLE THEATRE

Fall production of the Moose Jaw Little Theatre was "John Loves Mary" under the direction of Mrs. Amos and Mr. Pendlebury.

SWIFT CURRENT LITTLE THEATRE

The Swift Current Little Theatre now has the use of the new technical school auditorium for their productions. The group has donated a cyclorama of grey curtains to the auditorium and plans extra lighting purchases. Several one-act plays have been selected for presentation in the fall.



Above: "Oedipus the King", last summer's major production of the Banff School of Fine Arts. Directed by Robert Stuart. Designed by Jack Neeson.

Below: The W.C.T.C. Executive sunning themselves on the roof of a Banff School

Chalet. On the left, the president, George Werier. Standing are: Jessie Richardson and Doug Doherty; sitting: Esther Nelson, Dorothy Somerset, Mary Ellen Burgess and Norma McGougan; on the ground: Dick MacDonald and Ken Gordon, secretary.

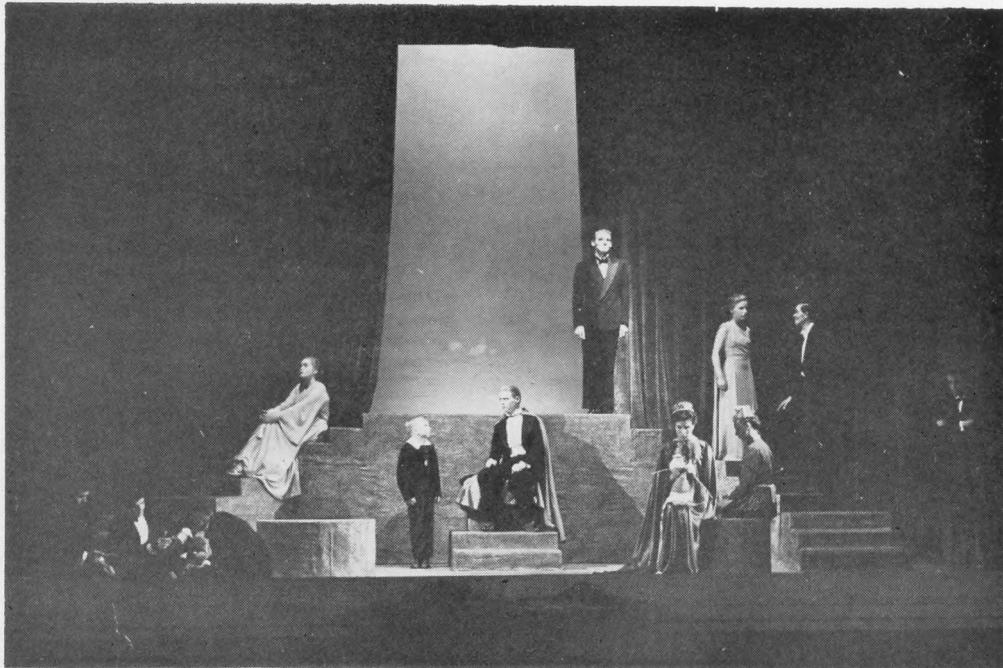




At the University of British Columbia's Summer School of the Theatre, August, 1949. **Left**, "Rumpelstiltskin" himself in a dramatization for children of the fairy story of that name. Directed by Sidney Risk, and designed by Mario Przek.

Below: Robert Gills' production of "Antigone" by Jean Anouilh.

Photos: Visual Education Service, U.B.C.



SCHOOLS

Finals for the high school festivals will be held in the Technical School, Saskatoon, on Wednesday, March 22nd, at 8 p.m., when the winner of the North Semi-finals meets the winner of the South Semi-finals in the provincial playdowns. The Western Stage Society will be presenting the awards this year; instead of individual winners, every person who reaches the finals gets an award. A public school is asked to present a play for adjudication at this time, which coincides with the Sask. Trustees Convention.

The Semi-final festivals will be held in Saskatoon and Regina on Monday and Tuesday, March 20th and 21st, when the winners of the Zone festivals will compete. The 14 Zone festivals must be completed by March 7th. Arrangements re date and place are in the hands of the festival committees in one of the larger centres of each zone. Adjudicators are supplied free to all member groups by the Sask. Recreation Movement.

Local festivals must be completed by February 7th. Usually winners of Home festivals arrange to meet in a convenient centre and hold their eliminations with an adjudicator supplied by the S.R.M. Home festivals are often held in high schools or collegiates where they have two or more groups producing plays. These are usually adjudicated by a local committee or a drama teacher from a nearby point.

Non-competitive festivals were arranged in the fall in Oxbon, SooLine, Radville, Saskatoon East, Saskatoon West, and Watrous school superintendencies. Last year 204 groups, both high and public schools, participated in festivals. Registration to date indicates an increase for this season.

Drama was an elective subject taught in

the two provincial Normal schools during the summer sessions, with Mary Ellen Burgess as guest lecturer. Outlines for drama in the elementary grades formed the subject matter of the course, ending with an exhibition of puppet shows and shadow plays in the corridors the second last day of the session.

SCHOLARSHIPS ARE ANNOUNCED

Mr. Harold Crittenden, the manager of Broadcasting Station CKCK, Regina, has announced to junior Thespians in the province who plan to compete in the provincial playdowns, that the station is granting four one hundred dollar scholarships to outstanding students in the drama field. These will be awarded at the finals of the competition which will be held in the Technical School, Saskatoon, Wednesday, March 22nd, 1950. The results of the adjudications will be the basis of the awards. These scholarships are to be used to assist the students to attend summer classes in Drama.

In addition to the above, a prize of \$125 will be presented to the organization presenting the best three-act play in the Class A section of the regional festival, and \$75 to the organization sponsoring the cast presenting a one act play in the same festival. A further prize of \$50 will be given to the winning cast for their sponsoring organization in the Class B section. Class A festival is the senior festival for more seasoned competitors while Class B festival is for less experienced casts from churches and educational institutions in urban and rural points.

The Advisory Committee to the School Drama festivals highly commend CKCK Broadcasting Station for their action in helping to provide the much needed leadership in community theatre.

ALBERTA

BANFF SCHOOL OF FINE ARTS

Festival Week in Banff, August 15th to 19th, was the culmination of another successful summer of theatre classes. The week started off with a reading of three of the plays written in Professor Conkle's class in playwriting: "Barbotte, the Wild Fish" by William M. Petty; "Magpies" by Milwyn A. Davies; and a historical play, suitable for schools, about the Emperor Maximillan by M. Maxwell.

Two performances were given of a programme of new Canadian one-act plays: "The Voice of the People" by Robertson

Davies and "So Sweet in the Springtime" by William M. Petty, directed by Burton W. James; "In a New World Alley" by William M. Petty, directed by Esther Nelson. Sets were designed by George Palmer and constructed by his class in Stagecraft.

The major production, Sophocles' "King Oedipus" (Yeats' translation) and "The Happy Journey" by Thornton Wilder, also played two nights to enthusiastic audiences. Both plays were under the direction of Robert Stuart. The set for "Oedipus" was designed by John Neeson and built by the class in Stagecraft.

CALGARY

Workshop 14

First production and festival entry will be "The Rivals" by Sheridan. Rehearsals are under way in Workshop 14's new barn which members of the group have been working on during the summer and fall.

Calgary Civic Theatre

The Civic Theatre's season opened on October 13th with three productions of "Heaven Can Wait" directed by Mr. T. E. Snelgrove. Plans are under way for the second production, "Laura", which will be entered in the Dominion Festival.

Arts and Letters Club

This is a newly formed group with an ambitious program. The Arts and Letters Club is planning to enter their first play, "An Inspector Calls" by J. B. Priestley, in the Dominion Drama Festival. They are also concerned with the promotion of Arts and Letters in Calgary by helping to bring stage productions, lecturers and speakers to the city.

BANFF LITERARY-DRAMATIC CLUB

The Literary-Dramatic Club is going into its twenty-sixth year with the objective of training young people to take over some of the responsibilities. Plans are under way to hold workshop classes augmented by Extension courses in Drama early next year and to confine productions to one-act studio plays in order to develop new actors and directors.

LETHBRIDGE Y.M.C.A. LITTLE THEATRE

This little Theatre group is planning to do a three-act comedy which they hope to enter in the Dominion Festival.

HIGH RIVER

Congratulations to High River on the formation of a community theatre on October 18th. The group is already planning to do Gwen Pharis Ringwood's "The Jack and the Joker", a play about the pioneer editor of High River, Bob Edwards, for its first production early in March.

In conjunction with the production will be the formal christening of the theatre, for which no name has yet been decided upon.

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

The Drama Society staged a successful production of "Alice in Wonderland" for four performances, Nov. 30th to Dec. 3rd, directed by Les Pilcher. A new group known as the "Studio Players" and drawn largely from staff and Alumni of the University presented Pirandello's "Henry IV" in the new and intimate Studio Theatre for five performances from Dec. 7th to 10th.

EDMONTON

The Edmonton Community Theatre gave a performance of "The Winslow Boy" by Terence Rattigan, directed by Charles Sweetlove, in the hall of the Recreation Commission during the week of November 21st. Their next production will be Samuel Raphaelson's "Jason" directed by Eric Candy. This is for early February.

A group under the direction of Alwyn Scott performed Shakespeare's "Julius Caesar" in the auditorium of Westglen High School during the week of Dec. 5th. This production was noteworthy for its scene and costume design and for the excellent way in which the level of the gymnasium floor was linked as a playing area with the stage itself.

DOMINION DRAMA FESTIVAL (Alberta Regional)

The Alberta Regional Festival is being held at Edmonton this year on January 26, 27 and 28 in the University's Convocation Hall. A team of three adjudicators have attended rehearsals and performances in various parts of the province, and they have selected three groups for participation: Workshop 14 of Calgary in Sheridan's "The Rivals"; Calgary Civic Theatre in "Laura" by Caspary and Sklar; the Studio Players of the University of Alberta in Pirandello's "Henry IV".

BRITISH COLUMBIA

UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

The University of British Columbia reports a very successful 1949 Summer School of the Theatre. It presented two major productions. Following what seems to be developing into a tradition the students presented one play for children, "Rumpelstiltskin" by Charlotte Chorpenning, which was directed by Sydney Risk, and one play for adults, Jean Anouilh's "Antigone", the guest director in this case being Robert Gill of Hart House Theatre, Toronto. Both plays were very well re-

ceived, the latter arousing much interested discussion. A beginning was also made in that highly specialized type of theatre—theatre with children, for the benefit of their own personal development, rather than for the sake of public performance. Miss Dorothy Somerset was director for the school, and completing the staff were Mrs. Jessie Richardson, Miss Dorothy Davies and Mr. Mario Prizek.

As a follow-up for the winter season the Extension Department is offering two evening courses, one in scene design and

stagecraft, and the other in puppetry. Mr. Mario Prizek and Mr. Sydney Risk will be in charge of the former, and they have some very interesting and practical plans. They are going to invite the students taking the course who are members of active drama groups to submit for class study one-act plays that they hope to produce. In this way the drama groups will gain actual designs for their productions and practical assistance in their execution. This will be an immediate benefit, in addition to the knowledge and experience which they can apply to the production of future plays. Final selection of plays to be studied will, of course, be made with a view to demonstrating as many different simple styles as possible.

The puppetry course was arranged at the request of the Community Children's Theatre. They are, this year, bringing in a professional puppet company which will take a number of children's puppet plays on tour to the Vancouver schools. Their hope for the future, however, is to develop out of the puppetry course a number of puppeteers right in Vancouver who will be able to create their own puppet plays for children, and also do puppetry with the children. The Canadian sculptress, Miss Beatrice Lennie, will be in charge of this course.

Another project for the winter is a series of practical lighting demonstrations for drama groups in the Greater Vancouver area. These will be arranged by the Drama Section of the Vancouver Community Arts Council and the Players' Club of the University of British Columbia in co-operation. The idea will be to demonstrate the principles and possibilities of good lighting on both a large and a small stage, using both full professional equipment and the best types of substitute equipment which are more within the financial range of the smaller drama groups.

DOMINION DRAMA FESTIVAL (B.C. REGIONAL)

This is the first of the regional festivals which will be held as the adjudicator, Mr. Maxwell Wray, wends his way across the continent. It is being held at the York Theatre, Vancouver, from January 16th to 21st, with matinees as well on the 18th and 21st. It promises to be a very lively week of eight plays, two of which, "Arms and the Man" (Shaw) and "Noah" (Obey) are being entered by the Everyman Theatre. The others are: Vagabond Players of New Westminster in "Papa is All" (Patterson Green); The Players' Club Alumni of Vancouver in "The Winslow Boy" (Rattigan); Curtain Club of Vancouver in "Outward Bound" (Vane); Vancouver Little Theatre in "An Ideal Husband" (Oscar Wilde); North Vancouver Community Theatre in "George and Margaret" (Savory); Elsie Graham Dramatic

School of Vancouver in "Come of Age" (Dane & Addinsell).

THE OKANAGAN

This is one of the most lively regions in British Columbia. Sicamous, Vernon, Kelowna, Penticton, Rutland and Summerland all have active groups. The Summerland Players recently produced Van Druten's "I Remember Mama" in their community hall, directed by Lacey Fisher. The musical section of the company staged "The Pirates of Penzance". Both play and opera were taken to nearby communities, an excellent custom which seems to be becoming quite common in British Columbia.

COMMUNITY CHILDREN'S THEATRE

A community venture to bring first-class entertainment to Vancouver children, and to stimulate in them a real appreciation of the arts of the theatre, is the Community Children's Theatre of Vancouver. The curtain went up on this year's activity with the September presentation in ten schools, before 5,500 children, of an internationally known New York puppet show.

"Goober Is My Name", by Wallace Puppet Productions, introduced the youngsters to a charming ghost and his circus friends; and as the audience roared at the amusing situations and held its breath over the story, the exquisite magic of the puppet world was opened to them. Gay music and country dances brought other arts into the picture, and to the children, most of whom had never seen a puppet before, it was an unforgettable revelation.

The "community" emphasis in Community Children's Theatre was very apparent in the Goober presentation, which is to be the first of several children's entertainments planned by the board for this year. The ten schools in which the play was shown covered every section of sprawling Vancouver; and because the production was sponsored by the Junior League of Vancouver, admission was only 25 cents for children, 50 cents for parents.

Again, the board itself is a good community cross-section and representation of the talents. It is headed by Mrs. Kenneth Caple, active in many varied "good works", and includes Mrs. Jessie Richardson of the Vancouver Little Theatre; Owen Thomas, inspector of elementary schools in Vancouver; Nora Gibson, representing the Community Arts Council of Vancouver; Mrs. Robert Travers, artist and chairman of the women's committee of the Vancouver Art Gallery; and Marjorie Johnstone, representing MacMillan Clubs in Vancouver.

Mention should also be made here of the very enterprising course in puppetry described in the previous section. This course was arranged by the Department of Extension at U.B.C. at the request of the Community Children's Theatre.

GROUP PLAY-MAKING by Mary Kelly, illustrated by Bruce Roberts. (Toronto: Clarke, Irwin & Co. Ltd.). \$1.65.

It's the time of the annual wail: "Yes, there are many plays but it's so difficult to find one that answers the needs of our community theatre group." There is no tailor-made solution to this problem. However, Mary Kelly's experiment in group play-making with her drama classes in English villages might offer a partial solution to the enigma.

The idea of groups writing their own plays is by no means new. We've used the method for years in our creative dramatics for children. Where did the commedia dell'arte get its plays? Or the mimes of the Roman Theatre? Who wrote the street-corner comedies of ancient Greece? These people had no catalogue of plays to facilitate their selections. They got together and made their own.

Drawing from her experiences within her experiment, Mary Kelly outlines, step by step, the way a group might go about making a play. Although never dogmatic about the method to be used, the author is consistently explicit in her description and explanations of the process involved. She includes eight of the plays which were made under her direction. Just how each of these plays was developed is explained clearly and in detail. The sprightly line drawings by Bruce Roberts lend a delightfully informal note quite in keeping with the tenor of the writing: it's work to write a play, but profitable, satisfying work.

Group play-making was introduced by Prof. G. P. Baker at Harvard (later it gained wide recognition and success at North Carolina University under the late

Prof. Koch) for the purpose of teaching dramatists. Mary Kelly uses group play-making as a method of teaching drama. Her use of the method has obvious advantages over the average acting class where the development of specific skills of the actor is seldom closely related to the play-in-rehearsal.

She uses group improvisation to develop the play once the subject material (usually drawn from the traditions and history of the community) has been decided upon and discussed. In the final stages of development the play is written down. Thus the actor learns by doing: what is dramatic, what makes a good or a bad play, elements involved in play structure. Through discussion of his own and other peoples' contributions he develops the ability to analyze and criticize objectively. He is faced with not only a desire but a need to read the plays of master dramatists to discover how they solved their problems. He develops an awareness, an understanding of the people in his own community and the relationship of the theatre to the community. Perhaps not the least of these and other advantages is that the actor is able to carry away material evidence of his creativity—a play!

By comparison with certain books on playwriting "Group Play-Making" would be of little use to the individual student. However, as Mary Kelly explains, the book was not written to be used as a technical handbook, but rather as an inducement for other drama teachers to try a similar experiment. The book could certainly serve as a stimulating and practical guide for directors of both young people's and adult groups who are not only seeking to train their actors but also are searching for a play that is made-to-order.

E. I. N.

continued from page 17

the United States or in England, are: Joan Miller, the original television girl in London and now playing in West End productions such as "Pick-up Girl"; Fletcher Markle, producer of Ford Theatre, who directed "Julius Caesar" in modern dress for the Little Theatre when he was seventeen, and played in several shows; Guy Glover, now associated with the National Film Board, who was in many Little Theatre shows; Barbara Kelly, who with Arthur Hill, another Vancouver boy, is currently playing in "The Animal Kingdom" in London, England, got her start with V.L.T.A.; Barbara's husband, Bernie Braden, is also making quite a name for himself both on the stage and in films, as is Peggy Hassard who is the wife of Arthur Hill and who has had many parts in stage productions and in films. We hope to see some of the films in Canada shortly. Basil Langon is also doing very nicely for himself in England playing in the provinces.

MOBY DICK (a play for radio by Henry Reed from Herman Melville's novel. (Toronto: Clarke, Irwin & Co. Ltd.). \$1.50.

Commissioned by the BBC and first presented on the air in January 1947 with Sir Ralph Richardson as Ahab, the radio adaptation of **Moby Dick** is an exciting and skilfully-knit piece of dramatic writing.

In Reed's hands **Moby Dick** becomes essentially the drama of Ahab, his bitter hate of the White Whale and his vengeful pursuit of it. Necessarily, the many technical chapters about whaling and indeed the great wealth of detail which rounds out the comprehensive picture painted in Melville's novel can have little place in a radio drama. The vastness, in fact, of the novel is in some respects lost. But Reed has caught the symbolism and the essential drama of the tale, and has used these most vital ingredients of Melville's book to create a radio play of considerable dramatic power.

Reed states in his preface to the play that his only deliberate falsification of the story is the destruction of Ishmael with the rest of the crew. He states that he is not convinced that Ishmael's survival serves any other purpose than that he is left to tell the tale, and he feels that the epilogue which Melville has Ishmael utter at the conclusion of the novel, beautiful as it is, might well prove an anti-climax on the air. Certainly, whatever one's opinion on this point may be, one realizes when reading this adaptation that Reed's cutting and rearranging of dramatic incidents has all been done in masterly fashion.

The readers of Melville's **Moby Dick** who are irritated by the somewhat sententious and facetious style adopted at times by the author will enjoy this radio version. Stripped of sententious wordiness the exciting radio version of Ahab's "quenchless feud" is unfolded in the forthright words of the men, intermingled with Melville's phrases of great wisdom and poetic beauty and the original poetry which the poet-adaptor Henry Reed put into the mouths of Father Mapple and Ishmael when he has them play the role of commentator.

Reed designed his version of **Moby Dick** to be used with music, and Anthony Hopkins provided him with an original score. With music subtly underlining both the stark grimness and the poetic beauty of this tragic drama of Man against Fate, a production of Reed's **Moby Dick** would be gripping indeed.

—M.W.M.

FESTIVAL

VEHICLES

Three-Act:

Guest Room—Comedy by Arthur Wilmert; 4m. 4w. 1 int. Of the original New York Production, Robert Benchley said in the *New Yorker*, "Approbation with three palms." Percentage Royalty Plan \$1.00

The Man on the Stairs—Mystery by E. Clayton McCarthy; 4m. 5w. 1int. Requires a trick setting for the vanishing man but it is well worth it. Percentage Royalty Plan \$1.00

The Inspector General—The Dolman and Rothberg version of the Gogol farce; 19m. 9w. 2 ints. Royalty \$15.00 90c

Larry—Dramatization by Robt. S. Illingworth of the diary condensed in "Reader's Digest"; 12m. 7w. 1 in. Royalty \$25.00 90c

Miranda—Comedy-fantasy by Peter Blackmore; 3m. 5w. 1 int. The play about the Mermaids that had such a long run at the Embassy Theatre, London. Royalty \$25.00 \$1.50

One-Act:

Cracked Ice—2m. 2w. Rowdy fantasy by Guernsey Le Pelley. Royalty \$5.00 60c

High Window—2m. 3w. Murder melodrama by Verne Powers. Royalty \$5.00 60c

Sod—2m. 2w. Pioneer drama of the prairies. Royalty \$5.00 60c

Balcony Scene—4m. 4w. Dramatic fantasy. First in Texas and Massachusetts festivals. Royalty \$5.00 60c

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